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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR FULTON MEETS GREENLAND PREMIER

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(U) Sensitive but unclassified; protect accordingly.

¶11. (SBU) Summary. Ambassador Fulton paid her initial call on Greenland's Premier, Kuupik Kleist, August 14. Kleist stressed that he desires close cooperation with the United States and the Ambassador committed to continued U.S. engagement in Greenland. Specifically, the two discussed how to further develop educational exchanges between the U.S. and Greenland, the prospects of addressing Greenland's many pressing social issues, and the challenges Greenland faces in creating environmentally sustainable economic growth. Both Kleist and the Ambassador agreed that the U.S.-Greenland-Denmark Joint Committee remains a useful tool in addressing some of these issues, while others may need discussion in broader fora, like the Arctic Council. The meeting came one week ahead of Ambassador Fulton's first visit to Greenland, scheduled for August 20-21. End Summary

(U) Change and Continuity

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¶12. (U) Ambassador Fulton held her first meeting August 14 with Greenland's Premier, Kuupik Kleist, at the offices of Greenland's Representation in Copenhagen. Kleist was accompanied by Head of Representation Tove Soevndahl Pedersen and Senior Advisor Adam Worm. The Ambassador was accompanied by Pol/Econ Counselor and PolOff (notetaker).

¶13. (SBU) Kleist warmly welcomed the Ambassador and told her he was pleased that she was meeting with him so early in her tenure. Ambassador Fulton, noting that Kleist was also still relatively new in his term of office, congratulated the Premier on his June 2 election win and told Kleist she was looking forward to visiting Greenland's capital, Nuuk, August 20-21. Kleist told the Ambassador that his new government was still very much settling in. The election had been historic, with Kleist unseating a party that had held the reins of government in Greenland for the past 30 years. Right now, Kleist and his government were working on next year's budget, which he remarked was "not a joy." Still, he was excited to be leading and was taking what he said would be first steps to help Greenland establish a more stable and diversified economy.

¶14. (SBU) Kleist congratulated the Ambassador on her appointment and remarked that he had met every U.S. ambassador for the last 20 years, but that Ambassador Fulton was the first woman he had met in the job. Ambassador Fulton pointed out she was in good company, as one of her predecessors, Eugenie Anderson, who served 1950-53 in Copenhagen, had been the first woman to carry the title of U.S. Ambassador. The Premier also said that he and all other Greenlanders had closely followed last year's U.S.

presidential election, adding that President Obama was extremely popular in Greenland. Kleist boasted that he had stolen a page from the President's own election campaign book, stressing the need for change in Greenland.

**¶5.** (SBU) Citing geography and a shared history dating back to World War II, Kleist noted that Greenland had always had a close relationship with the United States. That relationship had been re-launched in 2004 when the U.S., Greenland, and Denmark signed the Igaliku Agreements, which updated the 1951 defense agreement governing the U.S. military presence in Greenland. The Igaliku Agreements had also dramatically expanded cooperation between the U.S. and Greenland beyond just security issues to encompass culture and education, environmental and scientific cooperation, and the promotion of strong commercial and economic ties. Kleist expressed hope these ties could be strengthened, and noted that "we may need to review" some issues. He told the Ambassador he was looking forward to discussing Joint Committee and other issues in detail with her in Nuuk.

(U) Setting a Common Agenda

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**¶6.** (SBU) Asked by Kleist what specific interests she had vis-a-vis Greenland, the Ambassador pointed to climate change and December's COP-15 summit, public diplomacy and educational exchanges, and women's issues. Kleist noted that women were taking on an ever more prominent role in modern Greenland, with many now taking the lead in seeking education in Greenland, Denmark and abroad. (Note: Kleist's Inuit Ataqatigiit, or Inuit Community party, led the way in promoting women in the last parliamentary election campaign, providing half of its candidate seats to women. Kleist's government has four female and four male ministers. End Note) Women were increasingly leading in Greenland as climate change and economic development drive social change, the

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result being less prominence for traditionally male roles tied to fishing and hunting. Ambassador Fulton noted that the United States had undergone similar changes in its history, particularly as some communities moved away from predominantly agriculture-based economies. Still, whether it was in providing assistance in confronting some of Greenland's difficult social issues, or in helping young Greenlanders seek out additional educational opportunities and ways to connect with the broader world, the Ambassador said that the United States was interested in exploring opportunities for dialogue and partnership.

(U) Creating Sustainable Growth

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**¶7.** (SBU) Specifically addressing climate change, Kleist noted that Greenland had been the setting in recent years for a series of increasingly large and high-profile international gatherings. Kleist was happy for the attention, which Greenland had been able to use to attract new tourism and business interest to Greenland, but wanted to see more substance. Greenland, a self-governing territory of Denmark, was discussing with the Danes how to best balance new prospects for economic growth with the imperatives of a sustainable climate policy. When Denmark signed the Kyoto Protocol, Kleist explained, there was no real industrial development in Greenland. Now, Greenland faced the prospect of real growth in its mineral sector and was negotiating with U.S aluminum giant Alcoa to construct a large smelter in Western Greenland. This project alone would increase the volume of Greenland's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by an order of magnitude. Still, Greenland needed room to grow and develop economically, and Kleist hoped to reach an agreement with the Danes on how to allow for this before the COP-15 summit in Copenhagen in December.

(SBU) Ilulissat II

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¶18. (SBU) Kleist also raised the upcoming "Ilulissat II" meeting in Canada. Greenland had served as the venue for the original Ilulissat ministerial, which Kleist thought had done a good job of delineating, if not solving, some of the difficult issues surrounding pursuit of resources and the exercise of sovereignty among the Arctic coastal states. Kleist, however, was concerned that Ilulissat II was already creating some disagreements among members of the Arctic Council regarding what the meeting should do and who should take part. Kleist commented that, "to be honest, I'm not really sure what the purpose is." Kleist wondered whether there might be opportunities for the U.S. and Denmark/Greenland to coordinate in advance of Ilulissat II and he told the Ambassador that the Danish embassy in Washington had recently approached the Department (Note: presumably, OES. End Note) to discuss this.

(U) Joint Committee, Self-Governance

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¶19. (SBU) Regarding the U.S.-Greenland-Denmark Joint Committee, Kleist said he believed there had been good progress. He felt that all three sides wanted to see the Joint Committee flourish. Kleist voiced the hope that all sides would continue to contribute resources and time to the Joint Committee, where Greenland felt it was especially important to focus on exchanges and to look for ways to provide young Greenlanders additional opportunities to advance their education.

¶10. (SBU) On the recently-concluded Self-Governance Agreement with Denmark, which entered into force on June 21, Kleist said there were two broad views in Greenland. One was inward looking, arguing that self-governance made Greenland "master of its own house" and should lead to increased Greenlandic autonomy. The other view, which Kleist said he championed, asserted that more self-governance for Greenland required more engagement with the rest of the world, particularly with Greenland's neighbors. Kleist said he viewed relations with the United States through this prism, and wanted to do what he could to encourage the U.S. and Greenland to do more together. The Ambassador echoed that sentiment, noting that the U.S. was ready to strengthen ties with Greenland.

(U) Comment

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¶11. (SBU) Kleist is a savvy politician and it was clear that he wanted to use this first exchange with Ambassador Fulton to highlight cooperation with the U.S. He avoided more

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controversial topics like "CIA flights," or the 1968 crash of a nuclear-armed B-52 bomber in Greenland, and in discussing the Joint Committee he largely steered clear of requests for dedicated funding (which we have indicated in the past will not be forthcoming). Still, in the days following his election in June, Kleist said publicly that he would be reviewing most of Greenland's agreements with international partners to ensure they were producing the best results for Greenland, and Kleist at one point in his meeting with the Ambassador noted that "we may need to review" some issues. Kleist knows that the U.S. presence in and relationship with Greenland is the largest and most developed of any international partner's. Our security cooperation at Thule Air Base, our growing agenda in the Joint Committee, and the Alcoa aluminum smelter project all are reasons for Kleist to look to the U.S. for partnership and support as Greenland enters a new era of greater autonomy.

FULTON